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BOOK REVIEWS

ALTRUISM. ITS NATURE AND VARIETIES. The Ely Lectures for 1917-18.
GEORGE HERBERT PALMER. Charles Scribner's Sons. 1919. Pp. x, 138.
 \$1.25.

This little book is Professor Palmer at his best. One is justified in saying that it *is* Professor Palmer; for it is in reality not a book, but a wise man teaching, a great teacher reflecting, a subtle thinker setting forth his ideas. It is in its form, not so much instruction as consultation. The teacher is sitting at his desk with a group of young men about him, and reporting to them in the most intimate fashion his experience of life. "I have been moving about lately through the country," he begins; "When a plate of apples is passed and I pick out the best one," he goes on; "A stranger hands me a five dollar bill;" "A man I knew broke his leg" — how elementary and unsophisticated such teachings appear! One might even suspect that they were mere autobiography. The fact is, however, that the profoundest antinomies of conduct are approached through these trivial incidents, and that, in purporting to narrate the experience of the teacher, they in reality illustrate the most serious problems of ethics. The great guns of philosophical discussion are disguised by this ingenious camouflage of simplicity. It is not egotism which is using the personal pronoun, but dialectical skill. If education means the "e-ducing" or drawing out of a student's mind, few finer instances of the higher education could be cited than this ingenious familiarity with which Professor Palmer gently persuades consent. "When he putteth forth his sheep," it was said of the greatest of Teachers, "He goeth before, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice."

This little book of eight lectures deals in this casual manner with the fundamental problem which confronts both individuals and nations today — the issue between egoism and altruism, individualism and socialism, the person and the community, the integrity of one's own character and the obligations of the life in common. This conflict of types, which has become the central theme of contemporary politics, as it has always been the chief perplexity of personal conduct, is summarily disposed of by Professor Palmer through his doctrine of the "Conjunct Self" — the essentially social nature of the individual, the unreality of the separate self, and the consequent merger of altruism with egoism. The successive stages through which this conjunctive principle develops are traced in successive chapters,

whose titles have the genuine Palmeresque touch of paradox and surprise. The teacher with dainty discrimination tries various words in succession to fit his theme, as a man of fashion might stand at the counter and select a necktie. One word is too vivid; another too dull; another does not match his thought. At last he settles on names which seem at first unsuggestive; but as he dresses his subject in them, they seem made for his discourse. "Manners," "Gifts," "Mutuality," "Love," "Justice" — such are the successive steps by which Egoism identifies itself with Altruism. "Manners" are simply the give and take of social life, the voluntary conformity to a conventional code; "Gifts" are the more substantial tribute of the person to the common life; "Mutuality" is the definite recognition of the "duality of giving;" "Love" is the flowering of mutuality into identity. "Perfect love knows no giving. What is there to give? All thine is mine, all mine is thine." Yet even Love is "selective mutuality," and beyond it lies that "public love which I have ventured to call Justice." "Justice knows no persons; or rather it knows everyone as a person and insures each his share in the common good." Justice is "the impartial love of our fellow-men." "In this external and superpersonal love, altruism attains its fullest and steadiest expression. But so does egoism too." "The conjunct self finds in this judicial love its large opportunity." "Socialism which does not promote individuality, individuality which does not tend toward a completer social consciousness, are alike delusive. Each must find its justification in the service it is able to render to its pretended foe."

Thus, with firm tread and gracious ease, Professor Palmer mounts the stairway of his argument. Each step is solid in itself, and each in turn prepares for the next. There is a sense of inevitability in the procedure. One could not step aside without intellectual disaster. The scholar takes the teacher's hand, and the way up becomes plain. Yet even more instructive than the ascent is the conversation on the way. Starting from a lifetime of acute observation and profound experience, the veteran teacher talks, as he mounts, of the limitations and insufficiency of each step. "One must not count 'Manners' too highly. It is as if I devoted a section to brushing the hair." There are defects in "Gifts." "It may be the part of wisdom to help only the strong, and let the weak sink." Even "Love" is "ever unstable." "Unrelated, it slips down into the lower forms of altruism." Cogent as are the formal arguments of the book, these passing reflections on the conduct of life may not improbably remain in the memory of many readers, as similar reflections remain in the

minds of many hearers of Professor Palmer's oral discourses, as the most convincing evidence of his sanity, discrimination, and poise.

There remains a further aspect of this little volume which is of more immediate significance. It is its relation to the movement of contemporary thought. The mind of the present time has been almost completely diverted from the ethics of personality to the ethics of social relationships. The Community, the State, the Labor Union, the Syndicate, the Revolution, have become the units of value. Professor Palmer, on the other hand, has represented to a whole generation of students the classical school of ethics, the analysis of motives, the classification of virtues and vices, the springs of action, the personal ideals. In the hall of Philosophy at Harvard University, Professor Palmer has delivered his famous lectures on the ground floor, while above him were collections illustrating social ethics, or the application of duty to the amelioration of modern life. There seemed to be here a division of fields. The student, having examined with Professor Palmer the nature of goodness, might mount to the second floor and study goodness at work. This apparent separation of being from doing, of character from service, is, however, quietly bridged by the doctrine of the "conjunct self." There is no separate self. One man is no man. Goodness is not achieved until it is socialized. Professor Palmer does not invade the foreign domain of social ethics, as though he marched upstairs in Emerson Hall and appropriated a larger lecture room; he simply indicates the obvious truth that to reach the second story one must enter on the ground floor. His teaching is at once a summary of moral philosophy and an introduction to social ethics. The classical method of analysis underlies the modern movement of reform. Perfect social service is practicable only through perfect moral freedom.

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PANTHEISM AND THE VALUE OF LIFE, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO INDIAN PHILOSOPHY. W. S. URQUHART, M.A., D.PHIL. The Epworth Press, London. 1919. Pp. viii, 732. 12s. 6d.

This volume embodies a thesis approved by the University of Aberdeen for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, and appears to be in its entirety the developed form of a minor thesis adversely critical of Hindu pantheism, to which has been added the study of pantheism in the West, as represented by the Stoics, Spinoza, Hegel, and Schopenhauer; against which are urged the same objections as the author